

ONE MIDDLE-AGED WOMAN OPENING CHRISTMAS GIFTS

There is a Christmas tree in the lobby.
We agree to go down for tea
so you can open your gifts.
Everywhere we go, ghosts go with us.
The people our ghosts were never would have guessed
we would one year spend Christmas in Korea.
You asked for nothing. There was one thing on your list:

forgetfulness. I cannot give you that.
We attempt to recreate
the feel of home, revive our ghosts
and people the empty coffee-shop chairs.
It does not work. Festivity is hard to win.
Together with the warmth of reminiscence
come the bad times, regrets, Christmasses alone,

memories of Father and Mother angry
on Christmas day, Sister glum
or angry up until the end,
my last Christmas with her. Mourning rules
the mood. I usually forget in different lands.
"Just one more beer" is not my life at tea time,
but I drink with you. We have always been friends.

-- Roger Finch

Tokyo, Japan

YES

I know of drawing the line
I know of a bar of iron at the looking glass
I know of a boy who is bowing his head
I know of a boy who is learning how to say yes
I know of a boy who is learning how
to ty his own bowty